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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comparative summary of the salient features of recent research projects in the area of continuing education language courses and considers the implications of trends which emerge. Chapter 1 briefly summarizes investigations to date, both by the BBC Audience Research Unit and other research institutions. Chapter 2 presents an audience profile (age and sex, occupation, education, previous study of languages, reasons for learning, drop out) and summaries of learners' reactions to eight individual BBC courses. In chapter 3 are listed advantages of radio and television as media for language courses as summarized in the BBC publication, Teaching Languages. Chapter 4 concentrates on developments in the pedagogy and presentational style of language programs and also discusses current attempts to combat drop out. Chapter 4 presents a summary of research findings and suggestions for the future in the areas of program planning for various languages and learner support. The appendix contains tables for BBC language programs regarding course book sales, age, occupation, education, reasons for learning, previous experience in language learning, drop out rate, and reasons for dropping out. (YLB)

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Learning Languages from the BBC

Research into courses for adults

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Foreword

Donald Grattan
Controller, Educational Broadcasting, BBC

This booklet is about one sector of Continuing Education. It is offered as a contribution to the growing store of experience and knowledge of open learning and distance learning methods designed mainly for adults. It is an independent assessment of the effectiveness of some of the BBC Education's more recent foreign language projects. These combine television and radio programmes, learning manuals, cassettes, local classes and optional assessment. The design of these projects has changed extensively over the last 20 years taking account of what we know about the way adults at home or in classes respond. So Stephanie Rybak's work is another timely contribution enabling producers, consultants and local lecturers to take stock.

At this time when adult education is generally in recession and has come in for a substantial share of the severe cuts being made in education at a national level it will, I hope, be particularly valuable. It provides material which will serve as our response to the questions 'How effective is open learning for adults?' and 'What are the ingredients of an open learning system which students find effective?'

Stephanie Rybak's reaction will be welcomed by all those engaged in educational broadcasting whether by the BBC or by our educational colleagues in the independent broadcasting system. We shall all need to show that the money we spend and the resources we deploy are put to good use and really do offer something unique within the educational system.

Introduction

'I have been learning French on and off for the best part of fifty years and never progressed beyond schoolboy level. I'd never have believed that following one beginners' course could improve my French so much—I am, quite frankly, astonished at the difference . . . and, you know, it has done wonders for my business relations too.'

'I have been truly amazed at the progress I have achieved and am now looking forward with confidence to the achievement test in May and a two-week holiday in France in early April when hopefully I can really put my French to the test.'

'I have followed the full three-year course of French language studies through to *Allez France!* of last year, including attending each year's residential courses with you and the others of "the team". We all considered it a wonderful experience as you would know and I still regard myself as one of that great circle of friends that we all became. If only your present *Ensemble* audience could see the way as far as we concluded it, they would be aware that it is truly a rewarding experience.'

Those who are pessimistic about the future of modern languages in this country would be heartened to listen to some of the hours of tape-recorded interviews or read a selection of the thousands of letters and questionnaire-replies received from adults following BBC language courses. The extracts above are typical of the enthusiasm of very large numbers of people. This feed-back is important, not only for the broadcaster's personal satisfaction, but also to guide him as to which aspects of his programme were the most, and which the least satisfactory. Thus audience reactions and needs are channelled by audience research to inform and guide the making of future programme policy. This short paper aims to provide a comparative summary of the salient features of recent research projects in the area of Continuing Education language courses and to consider the implications of the trends which emerge.

1 Brief summary of investigations to date

BBC Audience Research

With language courses as with other kinds of programme, one of the first questions asked is how big an audience they reached. The best indication comes from the number of course-books sold (Table 1 in Appendix), though it must be remembered that some people buy the book but do not follow the broadcasts while others listen to the programmes without ever buying the book.
about the use made of language broadcasts. They are complemented by the work of the BBC Audience Research Unit which has the prime responsibility for finding out facts and figures about listeners and viewers. Valuable though the work of this unit is, the scale and methods of its operation preclude any comprehensive statistical reliability for programmes with relatively small audiences, such as language courses. It was therefore felt necessary to supplement the overview provided by the Audience Research Unit with other investigations, each restricted solely to the audience of one particular series. In this way it was hoped to provide accurate information on who was using language programmes, for what purpose, and most importantly, with what effect.

Research Institutions outside the BBC

Two institutions outside the BBC have been active in this area of research. They are the Language Teaching Centre of the University of York and the Language Centre of Brighton Polytechnic. The evaluation team at York consisted of Professor Eric Hawkins, Dr Bryan Howson and Dr Peter Green. The researchers at Brighton, working under Dr Brian Hill, have been Sandra Gasser, Allen Cooper, Anne Cuff, Susan Shallis, Dr Sandra Truscott and myself. In addition, Don Young, of the Brighton Polytechnic staff, spent part of a year's study-leave at the University of York con-

ducting an investigation into the learners attending a BBC-linked short residential course at Brighton.

The Language Centre, Brighton Polytechnic has investigated the following BBC Language courses:
Kontakte (beginners' German)
Wegweiser (second-stage German)
Kein Problem (third-stage German)
Heute Direkt (the news as seen on German television, broadcast 1978/79)
Get by in German/Spanish/French (absolute beginners' 'survival kits')
Two investigations, one German/Spanish and one Spanish/French
Ochen' Priyatno (beginners' Russian)
¡Digame! (beginners' Spanish)

In addition, the Centre is carrying out a project to develop ways of sustaining the motivation of adults following BBC languages courses at home.

The Language Teaching Centre of the University of York has researched these courses:
Ensemble (beginners' French)
Sur le vif (second-stage French)
Allez France! (third-stage French)

The approach to each project varied but it is fair to say that in each case the investigators were aiming to assess audience reaction to a course and to draw up a profile of the learners. They sought to establish the reasons for wanting to learn a particular language, the difficulties encountered, the effectiveness of different types of media for teaching, the reactions to courses and support materials and the reasons for drop-out. Responses were gathered through a combination of:

questionnaires and pre-paid postcards issued to learners at various stages of the course

phone calls

drop-out questionnaires

questionnaires returned by educational establishments and tutors

case-studies.

2 What these reports tell us about the learner

The audience profile

A vast amount of data has been generated by all the projects carried out over the last few years. Little attempt has been made to correlate all this information in a systematic way. What follows is a presentation of the most salient features of the learner-profile for different series. Unfortunately, neat quantitative comparisons are not always possible as in some instances the different research workers have used different categories in their analyses (e.g. age 41-60 or 41-65). However, the bulk of the data is presented in directly or nearly comparable terms and it is possible to discern common features in the profile of the language learner in general and the differences between the various audiences who have been subjected to scrutiny.

Age and sex of learners

In all cases but one, there were equal numbers of men and women. The exception was for *¡Dígame!*, where 63% of the initial audience was female. An interesting fact to emerge here was that a much higher percentage of these women than of the men persevered to the end of the course. Table 2 shows the age distribution for students of the various courses.
This table brings to light several interesting facts:

1 In the major French and German series, the more advanced courses are followed by a higher percentage of people over the age of 40. Evidence from drop-out questionnaires confirms the inference that younger people seem to be less able to continue learning over an extended period of time.
2 Beginners' Spanish is somewhat different in that it is particularly attractive to the over 40s, this being the generation most given to holidaying in Spain.

3 Beginners' Russian is one course to attract a significant proportion of its audience from the under 25s.
4 *Get by in German* has a very similar age-distribution to *Kontakte*. It attracted a substantially higher proportion of young people (i.e. the under 40's) and a substantially lower proportion of older people than either *Get by in French* or *Get by in Spanish*.
5 The percentage of students aged over 40 was very similar for *Ensemble* and for *Get by in French* but *Get by in French* attracted more teenagers (13% were 20 or less).
6 The second year's rebroadcasts of *Get by in Spanish* attracted a considerably older audience than before: this may reflect older people's tendency to be slower to respond to publicity and to take an initiative such as starting a course.

Occupation

Occupation (Table 3) is perhaps the most difficult area of all in which to attempt any meaningful classification and, not surprisingly, it is the one which shows the greatest disparity of headings from one project to another. The following main points emerge from this table:

1 The majority of learners are in employment of some kind.
2 Where kinds of employment are distinguished it is apparent that there are very few unskilled workers.
3 *Get by in French* and the rebroadcasts of *Get by in Spanish* had the highest percentages of non-employed people (i.e. housewives, students and retired people)—the number actually *un*employed was in all cases very small (about 1%).
4 French and Spanish attract more retired people than do German and Russian. This would seem to be because retired people wish either to brush up an already known language (French) rather than tackling a new one or to learn Spanish because they are going to Spain on holiday.

Education

In planning an educational series it is vital to know something of the educational background of one's audience so that the course can be pitched at the right level. One simple yardstick is the age at which respondents finished their full-time education (see Table 4).

The audience tends to be more or less evenly divided between those who left school before they were 18 and those whose education continued up till the age of 18 or more. A higher percentage than this of the population at

large left school before the age of 18, so the figures confirm the traditional picture of the client of Further Education as being someone who is already fairly well educated. It was in great part an awareness of this trend that led to the introduction of the *Get by in . . .* series: the hope was that they would attract a wider and more representative cross-section of the population.

Previous study of languages

Teaching methods must vary according to whether one's students have experience of learning a) any foreign language and b) the language currently being studied. The data in Table 6 was collected from learners following the courses investigated.

It is evident that very few people start learning their first foreign language by radio or television. It is also clear that a significant proportion of the audience for 'beginners' series (particularly in French) are not true beginners. The high percentage of learners having some experience of studying French reflects its traditionally privileged position in the school curriculum. It was disappointing that *Get by in French* had almost as high a proportion of 'faux débutants' as *Ensemble. Get by in Spanish*, however, with its greater holiday appeal, attracted considerably more real beginners than *¡Dígame!*—though this may be due to the fact that many of the *¡Dígame!* audience had already listened to *Get by in Spanish* and so were no longer true beginners! The high proportion of the *Ochen' Priyatno* audience to have learned some Russian before indicates the existence of a body of listeners who follow any Russian series they can on the BBC, broadcasts and home-study being in many cases the only practicable ways of pursuing their interest.

Reasons for learning

In some cases people have clear-cut reasons for wanting to learn a language: their firm is sending them to the country on business trips or they are marrying a national of that country. In other cases motivation is not so simple to define. People can be learning for reasons which they do not fully admit to themselves: to prove that they are not really stupid despite failure at school, or to provide an interest in lonely retirement, with the possibility of social contact in a linked evening class. In many cases motivation is complex: various related or unrelated factors have combined to make the person take the initiative of studying the foreign language. Asking this person to tick a box indicating his main reason for learning can only give a crude indication of the true motivational process, of which the

learner himself is often as ignorant as the researcher. Caution, then, is to be exercised in interpreting statistics in this field. The value of the figures in Table 5, is that they show the proportion of the audience with specific motives for learning as opposed to those with vague or complex ones, subsumed under such headings as 'general interest'. It is interesting to note how these vary from language to language and from level to level of course. The following trends are thrown into relief by this table:

Holidays: In beginners' courses (with the predictable exception of Russian) something like half of the audience indicated that holidays were an important motivator for their language learning. People following more advanced courses were much more likely to give 'general interest' or 'it keeps the mind alert' as their reason for learning.

Business/professional needs motivate a smaller proportion of the audience than might have been expected, given the recent stress on the need for businessmen to speak other languages if they are to be successful in exports. German is the most and Spanish the least popularly studied language for business purposes. The beginners' courses attract the highest percentage of those learning for business purposes.

The *friends/relatives abroad* category was another motive proposed in six of the investigations. In every case except *Kontakte* it proved to have been a more important motivator than business/professional needs. For some reason—possibly the presence of the British Army in Germany?—friends and relatives abroad display a tendency to be German-speaking rather than French or Spanish.

The only other specific reason for language learning given in any of the investigations was the 'knowledge useful for hobbies or pastimes' suggested in the *Kontakte* questionnaire. The remaining categories (those of 'general interest', 'it keeps the mind alert', 'promoting communication and understanding between peoples' and 'now that we are in the Common Market, increased knowledge of and contact with our European neighbours is very important') are all characterised by the vagueness of the actual use to which the language skills acquired will eventually be put.

The proportion of people giving 'vague' reasons for study increases, in general, with the level of the course. It would seem that people following the lowest level courses are much more likely to be goal-orientated—i.e. to want purpose-built programmes to teach them readily applicable skills—whereas people following higher level courses are more likely to be learning-orientated—i.e. to study because they think language learning is in itself a worthwhile activity.

Drop-out

It is difficult to give accurate statistics for the number of people who stop studying before the end of a course. It is probably true that people willing to fill in initial questionnaires are among the keener learners, so that their perseverance does not necessarily reflect that of the learning population at large. Added to that is the difficulty of interpretation when members of the initial sample do not return subsequent questionnaires despite reminders: they have dropped out from the research investigation but one does not know for sure whether or not they have also dropped out from the course. This double caveat is necessary for the interpretation of Table 7.

The only BBC-based factor accounting for a substantial proportion of drop-out in any of these courses is that of the programmes' being at inconvenient times. This is a difficulty of which the Continuing Education department is well aware, but the relatively small audience for language courses tends to relegate them to times of day which are recognised as unpopular in the ratings. An alternative theory—and one which finds little favour with those responsible for allotting broadcast times—is that putting educational programmes on the air at peak viewing/listening times might increase their audience, while people wanting to watch light entertainment which is usually scheduled for these times might well make the effort to tune in at other times. Thus the viewer/listener could be given a real choice between educational programmes and entertainment at all times of day, instead of being torn between two similar types of programme scheduled for the same time on BBC and ITV.

The factor common to the personal reasons given for drop-out would seem to be that there is not enough in the course 'package' to sustain motivation against the pressures of everyday living. The isolation of the learner would seem to be largely responsible for this: attempts to counter isolation and thus bolster up motivation are described in Section 4.

Learners' reactions to individual courses

The investigations I have discussed have made available to producers a considerable amount of information concerning audience-reactions to their programmes. Only a brief summary is possible within the context of this paper but it will give some idea of the enthusiasm, as well as the likes and dislikes, of BBC language learners.

Kontakte

As *Kontakte* was the first 'multi-media' language course ever broadcast in Great Britain, particular emphasis was placed by the researchers on the audience's use and appreciation of the different components of the course. The combination of media was successful with about 50% of the audience using both radio and television. Very few used radio only, but the number doing so rose from 5% to 9% by the end of the course. Respondents were asked to assess each element on a 5-point scale ('very useful', 'quite useful', 'not very useful', 'no use at all' and 'did not use'). The television element was used more widely than the radio, with most of the viewers rating it 'very useful' or 'quite useful'. Enthusiasm for it waned slightly in the middle of the course and then increased again towards the end. The percentage of people not using the television element increased slightly as the course progressed.

Although radio was not used as widely as television, opinion as to its usefulness is more definite, with considerably more of the respondents giving it a 'very useful' rating.

The book was considered to be 'very useful' by the majority of the sample throughout the course.

The record/cassette was not used by most people. Of those who did use it, the majority thought it 'quite useful'. However, in comparison with the other three elements, a higher proportion thought it 'not very useful'.

Wegweiser

Using the same five-point scale as for *Kontakte*, respondents were asked to evaluate the success of the book and the radio programmes of *Wegweiser*. The book attracted 44% in the 'very successful' category and 50% in the 'quite successful', compared with radio's 33% 'very successful' and 50% 'quite successful'. A higher percentage described the book as 'not very successful' than was the case for radio (8% as opposed to 4%).

Learners were then asked whether they were satisfied with the course. 88% said that they were; it is very interesting that those who dropped out were of the same opinion—82% of those who stopped following the course said that they were satisified.

A series of detailed questions probed learner-reaction to specific parts of the course. These established that the majority of listeners had not found the interviews too difficult, though 27% felt that they were too fast. There was strong support for the explanation of grammar points in English and in general the feeling that the amount to be learned each week was about right. The sub-group of drop-outs differed from the main sample in that 25% of them felt that there was too much to learn each week. A

further contrast between the two groups is evident in the answers to the question 'Did you feel you got sufficient help on *how* to learn from the course?' Only 53% of the drop-outs answered that they had had sufficient help. This is considerably lower than the 69% of the overall sample—though this figure too gives cause for concern, given that 88% had said that they were in general satisfied with the course.

Ensemble

Here again there was overall support and enthusiasm for the course. The combination of media was even more successful with *Ensemble* than with *Kontakte*: only 3% of respondents never used the television element and 18% did not use the radio. A further 6% used the television only occasionally and 20% listened to the radio programmes only occasionally. Respondents were asked to assess the course components separately.

Television: The grammar presentation was clearly felt to be very successful. The studio sketch was well thought of, but the cartoon 'Renard' was less successful. The gist comprehension film serial was the least liked element of the programmes. There was general approval for the television exercises, the amount of new language introduced in each programme and the sense of fun which characterised the television component.

Radio: Reaction to the radio element was very favourable, with the majority finding the new language content 'just right', the grammar explanations satisfactory and the dialogue not too difficult. Most people also agreed that there was enough opportunity to repeat and say things in French during the radio programmes.

Course-book: All elements of the course-book were well received with the exception of the 'Renard' sections and the general background notes, which were not rated very highly. The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the pace of the course. A substantial minority (about a third of all respondents) were *not* happy with the pace of the course, the amount of new language introduced etc. As 70% of the *Ensemble* audience were 'faux débutants' it is reasonable to suppose that virtually all those who were true beginners found the course too fast-moving for them.

Sur le vif

Comments about the course made by individual students were put to the whole group for their reactions. The results indicated an impressive majority who liked the book's style, design and general approach. The

background information on France was much more appreciated than in *Ensemble.* Most students were satisfied that the explanations in the book were sufficiently helpful, that the new language content of each programme was right and that there were enough exercises to practise the points taught. However, there was a substantial minority who felt that there was too much to learn each week, insufficient revision built into the course and not enough explanation in English. There was anxiety about grammar and frustration that the vocabulary section of the book did not give all words used in the course. There seemed to be some dissatisfaction with the LP's/cassettes which accompanied the series. Many people felt that these should contain the whole programmes as broadcast or at least some teaching and explanation and others wanted them to be used for pronunciation practice. A majority said that they would have been willing to pay up to ten pounds for a correspondence course linked to *Sur le vif* (cf. the Support Schemes Project).

Allez France!

Comments made by individual students were submitted to the whole sample for agreement or disagreement.

There was very strong agreement (90% or more) for the following statements:
'I liked the practical, up-to-date approach to language learning.'
'As much as the language, I appreciate learning so much about the French way of life.'
'I found the *Informations* sections of the book most interesting and useful.'
'I think it would have been useful to have a detailed grammar summary with an index of where points were taught in this third stage of the course.'
'I appreciate very much the fact that from the start the course has taught a vocabulary which is relevant and useful in everyday life.'

There was strong agreement (80—89%) for the following:
'I liked very much the way people were interviewed in all parts of France with their different accents.'
'I much preferred to have the course contained in one book instead of two (as with *Ensemble* and *Sur le vif*).'
'The vocabulary at the back of the book is insufficient to answer all the questions.'

70—79% of respondents agreed with the statements:
'I found that there was so much to learn and remember from week to week that I felt I was always slightly behind.'
'It is a small point, but I liked the use of bold print in the *Explications* to help reinforce the lesson.'

The following found agreement with 60—69% of respondents; it is perhaps at this point on the scale of percentages that the dissenting minority acquires significance:
'The excellent exercises and the presentation of grammar made the language easy to assimilate.'
'Congratulations to the interviewers who speak so distinctly.'
'I would have liked more exercises on the points stressed in the *Explications*.'
'I like to listen to both broadcasts of the programme, but the Wednesday broadcast was spoilt for me by poor reception on medium wave. All language courses should be on VHF.'
'I would like more help in pronunciation on records/cassettes and in the programmes. This is so important when one is following the course without a teacher.'

There was a small majority in favour of the following:
'I would have liked to be able to buy the complete text of each chapter on record or cassettes.'
'The programmes were very well presented and I enjoyed the questioning and 'cross-talk' of the principal speakers.'
'The parts of the course relating to Puylaroque are the best in all the materials provided.'

The majority disagreed with the following comments in the ratio of about 2:1:
'There should be more explanation of grammar points on the cassettes.'
'Explanation and 'linking' items would be better in simple French rather than English. I find this breaks the rhythm of concentration.'

Get by in Spanish and German

Feed-back from learners was obtained by means of carefully structured telephone interviews of a sub-group of learners, deliberately weighted towards the target audience of complete beginners and those with lower educational qualifications. It was found that both of the series in general met people's needs: in other words they wanted the kind of 'survival kit' that the series set out to provide. Learners reported that they had found the

presentation easy to follow, the topics and vocabulary well chosen and the whole series pleasingly down-to-earth. In general the use of actuality was welcomed, but there was criticism of the background noise in some of the recordings. The pace of the programmes was considered too fast by some of those who did not record them.

Ochen' Priyatno

The data on the *Ochen' Priyatno* audience was collected by means of a survey carried out at the end of the course.
Learners were asked to indicate how useful they felt the course had been in teaching them the four basic language skills. The results were as follows:

	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful
To understand	59%	40%	1%
To speak	51%	42%	7%
To read	52%	42%	6%
To write	25%	39%	36%

As with other courses, respondents supported the 'status quo' when asked for their detailed reactions to the course. A large majority of them found the presenters easy to understand; they liked the fact that they were British rather than Russian and felt that they spoke about the right amount of English in the course of the programmes. The progression from one programme to the next, the speed of the Russian spoken and the amount of revision were generally felt to be 'about right'; however, caution should be exercised here as only 33% of the respondents were absolute beginners. The difficulties many of these beginners must have had are reflected in the minority reactions to the difficulty of the course, 12% finding the progression too rapid, 21% the Russian too fast and 26% that there was not enough revision. The same minority disagreed with the general feeling that there were enough explanations and exercises in the book and that the exercises were pitched at the right level.

It was also clear from the questionnaires that there was a hard-line minority who wanted a firm grammatical framework for their language learning.

¡Dígame!

¡Dígame! was designed to make the best possible use of the different potentials of the radio and television media. Radio was seen as the medium for solid teaching and television as the medium for stimulation, motivation and presentation of images of Spain. It is clear from the research project that this division of labour had been successful and it is interesting to see how the audience assessed the two media. Respondents were asked to rate

the radio and television elements separately a) for the enjoyment they afforded and b) for their usefulness. 68% gave television the highest possible rating for enjoyment, but only 46% for usefulness, confirming the course designer's attitude to the medium. In the case of radio, 43% gave it the highest rating for enjoyment and 49% for usefulness. There was no significant drop-out from among the people following both radio and television when the first term's television programmes came to an end. Learners felt they had made most progress with understanding the spoken word and with reading Spanish, but tutors felt that the course had been most successful in teaching oral skills. Asked what their main problem had been in following the course, 45% of all respondents felt it was the lack of oral practice, 25% said it was self-discipline and 25% reported that it was the difficulty in estimating the progress they had made. The cassettes accompanying the series were unfavourably received but there was general interest in support schemes, with 70% saying that they would have liked a monthly *¡Dígame!* newspaper. The sub-sample of drop-outs contrasted on several points with those who persevered with the course:

1 A higher percentage of those studying alone rather than in a class dropped out.
2 Those with heavy commitments dropped out more than those with few commitments.
3 Younger people dropped out more than older people.
4 A higher percentage of men than of women dropped out.

3 Some advantages of broadcast language courses

The advantages of radio and television as media for language courses are summarised by Brian Hill and Edith Baer in the BBC publication *Teaching Languages* as follows:

'They are designed to be attractive, with a potential to motivate and involve the learner. (Watching people against a real-life background or following the activities of favourite characters week by week can be a strong incentive to language learning.)

They bring the voices of native speakers into the classroom, provide examples of authentic speech and introduce the foreign language in the context of everyday situations. The student learns by hearing and seeing the language in action.

They offer up-to-date material with a strong element of realism, e.g. interviews with ordinary people and with well-known personalities, comment and information on current events.

In language learning, where contact with the country is vital, broadcasts can supply the experience which is second only to being in the foreign country. They also help the teacher to keep in touch with developments in the language and the country in question.

The variety, the professional presentation and the technical quality of broadcasts cannot be achieved by the teacher alone in his classroom.

Broadcasts are accessible to practically every student and teacher. By recording programmes off-air—subject to certain conditions—inexpensive course materials can be built up.

Most radio and television language series are self-contained courses with fully integrated support materials which can be utilised in class either as a basis for course work with adults or as supplementary material.

Broadcasts can be used flexibly and incorporated into many aspects of class work (listening and speaking practice, gist understanding, project work, role-play). They can be exploited at many levels (beginners to advanced) and for specialist studies.

The voluntary end-of-course achievement tests available with some BBC language courses enable the student to assess his or her own progress and obtain a certificate in the form of a 'profile'. This provides an extra incentive to stay with the course.

Study weekends and short residential courses based on broadcast language series and organised by outside educational establishments help the learner to contextualise and socialise language learning. LEA residential centres often run these courses, or may be willing to run them if there is sufficient demand.'

And, of course, one of the big advantages is that one can learn at home, with no difficulties of transport, babysitters or evening class fees. For many people, this factor is all-important: they simply would not be able to attend classes. A good number of people would opt for learning from broadcasts even in an ideal world: some of them are impatient in group learning and others do not want to appear stupid in front of a class—learning at home is their way of quietly combatting an inferiority complex. One such man, interviewed in the course of the Brighton Support Schemes project, had left school unable to read or write. After a great struggle, he did manage to learn and encouraged by this, he decided to make up for missed opportunites and followed *Ensemble* and then *Sur le vif* all the way through. By this point he had gained enough confidence to entrust himself back into an 'educational' environment by coming on the course in Poitiers run for *Sur le vif* learners. The BBC courses had clearly played a major part in helping him to regain his self-respect.

4 Some problems arising and attempts to solve them

The story so far . . .

The pedagogy and presentational style of language programmes have changed as much as their classroom counterparts during the fifty or so years of their existence. Some of these developments are, at least in part, attributable to feed-back from research investigations. These include:

Emphasis on the acquisition of language skills. Recent series have followed the developmental work of agencies such as the Council of Europe and have defined courses much more in terms of performance objectives. (e.g. 'By the end of the course, the learner should be able to book a hotel room, order a meal, ask for and understand directions . . .').

More guidance for the student on *how* to study, including the introduction of a 'programme 0' at the beginning of major courses, radio 'trailer' programmes rather further ahead and, in some cases, a Christmas 'morale booster' with learners being interviewed on their study techniques.

Greater discrimination between the functions appropriate to television and those most suited to radio in the planning of a course. The most recent approach has been to use television as the motivational element and radio for solid teaching purposes.

Provision for those whose aims are more modest than the undertaking of a three—or even one-year course of study. The drop-out rate of 83% over two years from an initially highly committed sample of learners suggested that there might be a need for less ambitious courses—hence the launching of the *Get by in . . .* series.

Clearer distinction in course-books between vocabulary for passive comprehension and that which should be assimilated for active use.

A changing philosophy with regard to the presentation of the grammar element of the courses. In keeping with classroom practice and learners' comments, the pendulum has swung from traditional exposition to a kind of programme in which there is as little overt grammar as possible: it is hoped that grammatical rules and structures will be

assimilated unconsciously through listening and oral production based on model sentences. The pendulum is now beginning to swing back to try to meet the needs both of those learners who are terrified of formal grammar and of those who need rules to understand and cope with utterances in a foreign language.

Current attempts to combat drop-out

However, it is quite clear that the effectiveness of a given course, at least in terms of a definable improvement in skills or language acquisition, depends on complex factors, many of them not directly related to course design.

Table 8 gives a breakdown of the reasons given for drop-out by respondents in seven investigations carried out in connection with BBC Continuing Education language series.

The preponderance of personal, as opposed to course based reasons, together with the high rating given to all courses by model students and drop-outs alike, suggests that it would be profitable to extend the area of enquiry beyond that of the broadcasts themselves. What could one add to the courses to sustain learners' motivation against the pressures of everyday living?

It is here that the 'free comments' written by hundreds of learners at the end of structured questionnaires shed some light. Again and again, these unsolicited remarks refer in one way or another to the problem of learner isolation. Typical comments are 'It didn't seem to matter whether I went on studying or not—nobody knew and nobody cared!', 'you get fed up talking to a television screen—languages are meant for communicating with, after all,' and 'I get so frustrated having nobody to ask when there's something I don't understand.' This interpretation of people's comments was further tested by short questionnaires and structured discussions on BBC-linked residential short courses, in telephone interviews with *Get by in* . . . learners and by questions incorporated into the *Sur le vif* and *¡Dígame!* questionnaires.

Allez France! Support Schemes

The evidence accumulated, even in the early stages, warranted further work in this direction and in 1977 the Brighton Polytechnic Language Centre undertook to organise two pilot 'support schemes' for local people following *Allez France!*: a self-help group (a scheme that is highly successful in Norway and Sweden) and a telephone enquiry service which would allow them to telephone a tutor at a given time each week with any

questions they had about the course. Publicity was obtained through local book-shops selling the course-book, through libraries and on BBC Radio Brighton; however, it was inadequate, in that none of these channels was audience-specific (i.e. one could not guarantee that the people it reached were *Allez France!* learners). In all, a dozen or so enrolled for the telephone enquiry service and another dozen for a self-help group . . . small fry perhaps, but the self-help group is still meeting two-and-a-half years later.

Ensemble Support Schemes

Encouraged by the members of the *Allez France!* self-help group, it was decided to offer learner-support nation wide to *Ensemble* learners the following year. A leaflet giving joint publicity for the schemes run by the Language Centre and for the Home Tuition Pack (correspondence course) offered by the National Extension College, Cambridge, was inserted into all copies of the reprint of the course-book. The Language Centre Schemes were:

1 *A course newspaper, La Vue d'Ensemble*, published every five programmes. The amount of French in it increased as the course progressed and the vocabulary and structures were restricted to those learned in the corresponding chapters of the book. About 700 people responded to the publicity leaflet by ordering the paper. After TV programmes 6 and 7 the BBC broadcast a mention of *La Vue d'Ensemble*; the number immediately shot up to about 2,000—clear evidence of the need to present the different elements of a course as an integrated package.

2 *A network of self-help groups* was set up. Initially there were about 300 applicants from all round England, with a very small number from Wales and Scotland. Twenty-seven groups were established: in some cases these consisted of only three people, in others there were up to twelve. Nine of the groups continued throughout the year with some degree of success. The most remarkable one was on the Channel Island of Alderney, where an enthusiastic organiser recruited about forty people herself and ran meetings all year: they are, indeed, still meeting. The group conveners were recruited from two sources: first from among the people who had attended *Allez France!* courses run by Brighton Polytechnic, by the University College of North Wales and by the Brasshouse Centre, Birmingham and, secondly, by means of a letter inserted by the Franco-British Society into a circular being sent out to the 700 or so people on its mailing list. Well over 100 people wrote back to say that they would be willing to take on the job of group 'animateurs' if a local group were formed, and many more wrote to explain why they would not be able to do so and to wish luck

to the venture. Unfortunately the would-be conveners and the applicants did not always live close enough together to make groups practical propositions: distance, allied to the exceptionally hard winter and local factors such as poor bus services, was responsible for the 'failure' of many of the groups. In cases where there were enough applicants to justify the starting of a group but no convener, one of the group was asked to act as organiser: this was unsuccessful in the long term. People interviewed stressed that they 'felt it a waste of time if there wasn't somebody there whose French was good enough to correct yours when you made mistakes.' Conveners were supported by the Language Centre with notes on how to go about organising a self-help group, suggestions for activities based on each chapter of the course and a refund of incidental expenses.

3 *A telephone and postal question-and-answer service.* About 200 learners applied to join this scheme, but very few made any use of it. The letters page of a course-linked magazine seems a better channel for such a service.

The NEC's Home Tuition Pack was in two parts. The first was ordered by about 300 people and the second by about half that number.
In many ways the combination of radio, television, a course-book and a correspondence course is an ideal one. Without losing any of the advantages of the broadcast media and the flexibility of home-study, it allows the student to have feed-back on his progress, correction of his mistakes, explanations when he does not understand and the added incentive to study because 'somebody cares'.

One problem was that of time-lag. By the time people had bought the book, sent off the application form and received their study materials it was, in most cases, at least week six of the course, at which point they were expected to do the assignments linked to programmes 1 and 2. Earlier availability of text-books and accompanying publicity materials in the shops would go a long way towards solving this problem.

Questionnaires were sent out to everyone who enrolled with the NEC or with the Brighton Polytechnic Language Centre. These are currently being processed; when the analysis is complete it will furnish both a learner-profile and information on people's reactions to the schemes in which they participated. Initial impressions from these questionnaires indicate a high degree of satisfaction: the following comments are not untypical:

'It's good to know that other people are having as difficult a time as yourself—a self-help group is good for that.'

'For me, some kind of support activity would be absolutely necessary. Attendance at a local adult school made all the difference between perseverance and dropping the course altogether.'

Residential short courses. Obtaining feed-back on BBC-linked residential short courses has been an important part of the support schemes project. I have attended a dozen of them, sometimes simply as an observer, sometimes combining the role with that of teacher or learner, using a variety of investigational techniques: informal conversation, formal interviews and structured discussions and, in some cases, questionnaires. My colleague Don Young wrote his MA dissertation as a study of the learners on the *Allez France!* course in Brighton. His findings were in line with my own on other courses: almost all the students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the course, both as a means of improving their French and for the stimulus of working with tutors and other learners who shared their interest. All the course 'activities' (the name given to the informal lessons that made up the greater part of the week's time-table) received a 'useful' or 'very useful' rating from the majority of learners. As with other courses the only widely and strongly felt dissatisfaction was that there was not enough 'conversation'. It is difficult to see how this need could be met on courses where the student: tutor ratio has, for financial reasons, to be of the order of 10:1. The problem is that the students who are anxious for more conversation want to 'talk to the teacher' rather than to other students, a procedure which allows each student of a group of ten about three minutes' speaking time during a one-hour session. An important feature of these short residential courses is that they serve as a motivator for many people to persevere with the broadcast course. And for a substantial number of people, these courses are an inviolable annual fixture—it is not unusual to hear them described as the high-spot of the year. Indeed, many 'addicts' attend two or even more courses per year. The second learner quoted in the introduction to this paper is quite typical in regarding the course-participants as 'a great circle of friends'.

5 Conclusions

Summary of research findings

The audience profile

From the research findings that have been presented in this paper it is possible to draw a profile of 'typical' BBC language learners. A brief summary of the salient features of this profile will enable us to consider two important questions: *how can the BBC better serve this established audience?* and *how can other sectors of society be attracted to learning languages from the BBC?* The summary, then, is as follows:

1 *Sex:* there are equal numbers of men and women on almost all courses.
2 *Age:* Learners are of all ages with the percentage of those over 40 increasing for the more advanced courses. Few people following beginners' German or Russian courses are over 65 but on all other courses quite a number are in this age-bracket.
3 *Occupation:* Most learners are likely to be in white-collar employment.
4 *Education:* Most learners have continued their full-time education beyond the obligatory school-leaving age and very often have further qualifications such as degrees and professional diplomas.
5 Almost all learners have had some previous experience of learning a language. In most cases this has been French, so that the percentage of 'faux débutants' on French courses is particularly high. Course-writers take this factor into account by producing courses with fairly rapid linguistic progression, which naturally perpetuates the tendency for learners to be 'faux débutants' rather than true beginners.
6 Most respondents' experience of language learning has been by formal, grammar-based classroom methods as opposed to audio-visual, audio-lingual or radio/television based methods. 70% of

the *¡Dígame!* audience came into this category. Whilst a good number of these people had found grammar-based methods unsatisfactory, their expectations of language courses have been conditioned by them. Since the methods of BBC courses are so different from anything that the majority of learners have experienced it is important to give adequate guidance on *how to learn*. Many respondents in different investigations have indicated that they did not feel they had had enough help over this.

7 Growing numbers of learners have now had experience of following broadcast language courses. In *¡Dígame!*, the most recent investigation, the percentage of those having previously followed a television language course was a surprisingly high 36%.

Reactions to courses

In general, respondents' reactions to the courses they had followed—or even dropped out from—were highly favourable. Most learners appreciated the lively approach of recent years and very much liked the use of 'actuality' recordings. The majority were grateful not to have a 'grammar-based' course though there was a significant hard-line minority who felt the lack of grammatical explicitness. Numerous questions about the pace of courses, the amount learned and the way material was presented elicited supportive answers from the majority of respondents, many of whom felt that the BBC had succeeded where others had failed in teaching them basic communicative competence in the foreign language.

The multi-media approach to language learning was clearly felt to be a success and students' reactions to the roles of the different media involved confirmed the programme-planners' theory that television was generally regarded as more enjoyable and hence more motivating whereas radio was an excellent medium for solid teaching. Course books were praised for their design and approach, though it was felt that the vocabulary sections were generally inadequate. The least successful component of the multi-media courses so far has been the LP/cassette, not 'per se' but because it was felt that the material chosen (dialogues from the books) was not making the best use of the available tape.

As well as the compliments of the many, it is important for the BBC to take note of the dissatisfactions of the relatively few. There are learners who find the BBC beginners' courses too difficult, covering too much material at speed, introducing too much vocabulary for them to absorb and using actuality recordings in which the speech is too fast and is indistinct because of background noise. These people may be in the minority, but then so are the true beginners whom they doubtless

represent. Their criticisms must be taken seriously if the courses purport to be for true beginners as well as for 'faux débutants'. Respect for BBC language courses in Norway is tempered with the feeling that they cover about twice as much material as the average learner can cope with in a year, even in a linguistically aware country like Norway. The introduction of the *Get by in . . .* series has been a useful step towards meeting the needs of the true beginner and of those who are unwilling or unable to embark on a whole year's programme of study.

Drop-out

Whilst it is only possible to give approximate figures for the rate of attrition on every course, it is clear that a substantial proportion of those who start courses never finish them. 'A fortiori', it is abundantly clear that very few people follow a whole three-year cycle of programmes from beginning to end.

Reasons given for drop-out are overwhelmingly personal rather than course-based, the one BBC-based factor considered significant being that of the inconvenient times at which language programmes are broadcast. However, it is also clear that courses do not entirely correspond to learners' hopes on at least one major point. When asked at the beginning of the broadcasting year which language skills they particularly wish to acquire, the greatest percentage of learners opts for *speaking*. When asked at the end of the course to assess the progress they think they have made in the different skills, most learners assess their reading and aural comprehension more highly than their ability to speak the language.

The personal factors which provoke drop-out are far more difficult to counter than course-based ones. *The Get by in . . .* series have gone part of the way towards providing a solution for those whose difficulty was the inability to sustain their motivation all the way through a twenty or twenty-four week course. The next step must be to tackle what seems to be the largest common denominator of so many of the personal factors responsible for drop-out: that of learner-isolation. The demotivating effect of the lack of encouragement, oral practice, feed-back on progress, problem-solving facilities and sheer sense of belonging should not be underestimated. Giving learners the support they need implies a broader approach to BBC language courses. Broadcasts and course-books should be conceived as part of a package, usable on their own, as at present, but primarily intended to be integrated elements of a coherent language-teaching strategy. The developments of this strategy, with the various support schemes and materials which it implies, could mean the difference between the success and relative failure of future courses.

Suggestions for the future

The suggestions which follow are personal ones, informed by the research findings outlined above and by contact with several thousand BBC language learners. They are only suggestions but they could perhaps provide a basis for discussion of future BBC policy.

Programme-planning

The usefulness of the present three-year cycles of language courses is highly questionable when so few people actually follow them all the way through. If a three-year plan is regarded as convenient and proper, it should be made as flexible as possible. The following scheme would be one alternative to the structure of the three-year cycles as they now stand.

French, German and Spanish

Year 1 Multi-media, following a similar pattern to *¡Dígame!*, so that there were fifteen television programmes instead of the customary twenty-four.

Year 2 Primarily a structured radio course, as at present, but with the addition of a few television programmes made possible by the reduction of television broadcasting in Year 1. These TV programmes might be broadcast on a monthly basis or weekly for the last term of the course. They could be simple documentaries or dramatic serials, or a combination of the two: their pedagogic purpose would be to provide an enjoyable means of revising the material covered in the more obviously structured context of the radio programmes.

Year 3 Ten radio programmes. These would not be a structured course, but would be flexibly planned on a modular basis so that missing one programme did not preclude following the next. Magazine programmes have been popular in the past with BBC language learners and would be one appropriate format for some of these advanced modules.

The other ten programmes normally scheduled for the third year of the cycle might perhaps be devoted instead to an absolute beginners' course in the language, of the *Get by in . . .* type. This would be valuable on its own for those who wanted a 'survival kit' and would also serve as a 'pre-course course' for the absolute beginner who was intending to follow the course primarily aimed at 'faux débutants' the following year (the repeat of Year 1). Large

numbers of people went on from *Get by in Spanish* to follow *¡Dígame!*, and I have seen in my own teaching how much more easily students tackle *Ensemble* when they have first worked through *Get by in French*.

The argument for including Spanish with the 'major' languages is two-fold. Firstly, there is its increasing popularity in recent years, which is, of course, largely due to the growing numbers of people going to Spain on holiday. Secondly, there is the higher average age of learners of Spanish and the evidence of the greater popularity of advanced courses with older people. This would suggest that there would be a viable audience for 'third-level' programmes.

Italian and Russian

If the budget and the available air-space do not stretch to a similar pattern for Italian and Russian broadcasts, a two-year version might be proposed in its place. Year 1 would then provide the beginners' course for 'faux débutants' and Year 2 ten more difficult programmes planned on a modular basis, together with an absolute beginners' 'pre-course course'.

Other languages

The BBC's provision of occasional series in more 'unusual' languages such as Chinese and Arabic is a valuable service to a minority, since there are few other easily accessible ways of learning these languages in Britain. More series of the style of *Get by in . . .*, covering a range of minority languages, would be of great use.

Series intended for absolute beginners must have publicity aimed at people who are not regular listeners to Radio 3 and 4. The mentions given to the *Get by in . . .* series by Radio 1 and 2 disc jockeys were an idea that is worth repeating. Learners frequently complain that courses are given inadequate publicity.

The awkward times at which language programmes are broadcast have been shown to be the single most important BBC-based reason for drop-out. It is difficult to give full attention to study late at night (11 p.m.) whilst Sunday afternoon broadcasts can prevent family outings every week for the whole year if learners follow the course assiduously. It is encouraging that the scheduling of two recent language series *(Realidades de Espana* and *Russian: Language and People)* has met language learners' claims for more social transmission times.

Within individual courses, it should be possible to cater for a wider range of language-learning tastes. There is a substantial minority who

lament the lack of explicit grammar in modern BBC courses. Grammatical rules and explanations could be given as an optional extra, for those who find them helpful, alongside the text, in a special appendix or, if possible, in a BBC grammar-book.

Learners frequently complain of the length of time it takes to obtain BBC publications. They should be available in the shops at least two months before the start of courses—and not one week, as was the case with *¡Dígame!*, for example, to the great distress of evening-class teachers intending to use the course. The despatching of orders should be speeded up: if the course-book takes six weeks to arrive, as very often happens, the learner is no longer in a position to make use of it when he gets it because he has been left behind by the course. Course designers might also consider the possibility of having three programmes at the start of each series which did not require reinforcement from the course-book. This would ease the audience gently into the course and give them some chance of obtaining the book by the time they really needed it.

Learner support

There is no simple solution to all the personal factors which respondents blame for their dropping out from courses. The multiple answer suggested in this paper is that of a broadly based teaching strategy, the core of which is the course-book and the broadcasts. It must be properly integrated so that learners are aware of all the kinds of support available to them and so that the relevance of each is clear. At the same time it must be modular, so that learners are able to choose between the different forms of support, according to their needs and inclinations, without prejudice to the coherence of the course-package that results from their choice. One obviously useful form of learner support already in existence is that of the many day and evening classes that are linked to broadcast series. However, not everyone is able or willing to attend classes: there is a need for other, more flexible and informal kinds of support.

Those who are not house-bound by infirmity or young children might well profit from local self-help groups: in Norway where there is a tradition of self-help groups, the drop-out rate from those linked to the English series *Start* was a very low 2% over the first six months. The British situation is different from the Norwegian and pilot self-help groups have not been so successful here but they do have potential particularly if they are organised to recruit locally rather than from one central office. The Co-operative Union is trying just such a scheme this year for students learning Russian from the BBC. It will be interesting to compare the results of this venture with those of the Brighton scheme.

The most successful of Brighton's *Ensemble* support schemes was that of the course newspaper. 70% of the *¡Dígame!* audience said that they would have liked a paper linked to their course. Two brief mentions on television tripled the number of subscriptions to the French paper—further evidence for the necessity of integrating the support schemes into the course package as fully as possible.

A Scandinavian practice which might well be adopted here is the broadcast of a five-minute 'post-bag' spot every two or three weeks just after the main programme. It served to answer viewers' queries about difficulties they were having with the course and succeeded in creating a sense of two-way communication in the learning process. This post-bag appendix, which would have to be recorded in the week before transmission so that the questions in it were still relevant ones at that stage of the course, could include guidance on how to study and information about the various kinds of learner support available in conjunction with the series.

The residential courses and week-ends run for BBC language learners have proved highly successful over the last few years. It is tragic that some local authorities are seeing fit to axe this kind of provision because of the current financial restrictions. The sad irony of the situation is that they are doing so to save money, when other institutions such as the University College of North Wales, Bangor, the Brasshouse Centre for Adult Education, Birmingham, and the Language Centre, Brighton Polytechnic, have shown that courses can be run without losing money.

The National Extension College, Cambridge, has shown that there is a demand for correspondence courses that are properly integrated with broadcast courses.

In general, those who learn languages from the BBC are well satisfied with the courses they follow. If they drop out they will humbly say 'The fault, dear Beeb, is in ourselves and not in the courses.' The Corporation may justly be proud of its achievements in this area. However, a continued striving for excellence makes it necessary to focus attention on the points which leave room for improvement. Let us return to the questions at the beginning of this section. The first was how the BBC could better serve the established audience of its language courses, the second how new sectors of society could be attracted to learning. For those in the established audience who are satisfied with courses (regardless of whether or not they drop out from them) the most helpful action that the BBC could take would be to develop a strategy for improving the lines of two-way communication so that learners felt actively instead of passively and isolatedly involved in their courses. The minority who find the courses too difficult could be helped by the provision of series for absolute beginners with no

experience at all of learning any foreign language. Given appropriate publicity, this provision should also succeed in attracting new sectors of society: those who have hitherto been daunted by the prospect of learning a foreign language by any method. In the world at large, monoglots are in a minority. It will be very much to the credit of the BBC if it can be instrumental in giving the British too at least basic communicative competence in a language other than their own.

6 Appendix

Table 1: Course-book sales

Kontakte (beginners' German; the first British course to combine radio and television; first broadcast 1974/75)	Book 1 Book 2 Book 3	164,079 102,578 64,738
Wegweiser (second-stage German; radio; first broadcast 1975/76)	Book 1 Book 2	42,997 30,882
Ensemble (beginners' French; radio and television; first broadcast 1975/76)	Book 1 Book 2	200,908 121,695
Sur le vif (second-stage French; radio; first broadcast 1976/77)	Book 1 Book 2	68,762 53,781
Allez France! (third-stage French; radio; first broadcast 1977/78)		32,026
Get by in German (absolute beginners' 'survival kit' of five radio programmes; first broadcast 1977)		12,300
Get by in Spanish (as above)		21,742
Get by in French (as above; first broadcast 1978)		28,461
Ochen' Priyatno (beginners' Russian; radio; first broadcast 1973/74)		22,853
¡Dígame! (beginners' Spanish; autumn—radio and television spring—radio only, summer—television only; first broadcast 1978/79)		45,170

These figures show total numbers of course-books sold up to 29/2/80.
All the series except *¡Dígame!* and *Allez France!* were broadcast at least twice.

Table 2: Age

Kontakte	22-40	52%	41-65	32%	Over 65	5%
Wegweiser	20-40	36%	41-60	38%	Over 60	19%
Ensemble	22-40	41%	41-60	42%	Over 60	12%
Sur le vif A*	22-40	30%	41-65	55%	Over 65	15%
B*	22-40	41%	41-65	45%	Over 65	11%
Allez France!	22-40	24%	41-65	57%	Over 65	17%
Get by in German	22-40	52%	41-65	37%	Over 65	7%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/German investigation)	22-40	37%	41-65	45%	Over 65	13%
Get by in French	21-40	31%	41-60	36%	Over 60	20%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/French investigation)	21-40	27%	41-60	38%	Over 60	28%
Ochen' Priyatno Under 25 28%	25-40	28%	41-60	36%	Over 60	7%
¡Dígame!	20-40	33%	41-60	36%	Over 60	22%

*A—continuation sample (those who had also followed *Ensemble*)
*B—sample of those who had not followed *Ensemble*.

Table 3: Occupation

Kontakte	Employed full-time	67%		Housewives	14%
	part-time	6%		Retired	6%
				Students	9%
Wegweiser	No data				
Ensemble	Employed full-time	51%	+7% teachers	Housewives	20%
	part-time	8%		Retired	10%
Sur le vif A*	Employed full-time	47%	+7% teachers	Housewives	19%
	part-time	9%		Retired	17%
B*	Employed full-time	51%	+7% teachers	Housewives	18%
	part-time	9%		Retired	12%
Allez France!	Employed full-time	48%	+5% teachers	Housewives	14%
	part-time	7%		Retired	24%
Get by in German	Employed full-time	63%		Housewives	12%
	part-time	10%		Retired	9%
				Students	7%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/German project)	Employed full-time	45%		Housewives	11%
	part-time	19%		Retired	19%
				Students	3%
Get by in French	Skilled/Professional	23%		Housewives	
	Semi-skilled	28%		Retired	49%
				Students	
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/French project)	Skilled/Professional	22%		Housewives	
	Semi-skilled	32%		Retired	47%
				Students	
Ochen' Priyatno	No data				
¡Digame!	No data				

*The *Sur le vif* (A) sample is that of continuation students, (B) that of those who had not followed *Ensemble*.

Table 4: Education

Age at completion of full-time education

Kontakte	14/15 23% 16/17 29%	Under 18, 52%	18/19 10% 20+ 28%	18+ 38%
Wegweiser	No data.			
Ensemble	14/15 31% 16/17 33%	Under 18, 64%	18/19 10% 20+ 19%	18+ 29%
Sur le vif A*	14/15 20% 16/17 37%	Under 18, 57%	18/19 10% 20+ 32%	18+ 42%
B*	14/15 12% 16/17 32%	Under 18, 44%	18/19 17% 20+ 36%	18+ 53%
Allez France!	14/15 22% 16/17 40%	Under 18, 62%	18/19 11% 20+ 25%	18+ 36%
Get by in German	13/15 17% 16/17 25%	Under 18, 42%	18/19 13% 20+ 38%	18+ 51%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/German investigation	13/15 24% 16/17 31%	Under 18, 55%	18/19 14% 20+ 31%	18+ 45%
Get by in French	No data			
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/French investigation)	No data			
Ochen' Priyatno	No data			
¡Digame!	14/15 19% 16/17 27%	Under 18, 46%	18/19 15% 20+ 26%	18+ 41%

**Sur le vif* (A) = continuation sample, (B) = sample of those who did not follow *Ensemble*.

This table ignores people who were still at school/college at the time of answering the questionnaire since the percentage is in most cases a small one.

Observations

1. 8% of the *Kontakte* and 9% of the *Dígame!* audience were still at school/college at the time of answering questionnaires. **2.** 4% of the *Dígame!* audience completed their education at under 14 or over 23. **3.** *Get by in Spanish* attracted a higher proportion of its audience from among those who had left school before they were 18 than did *Dígame!* (55% vs. 46%) **4.** *Get by in German* attracted 42% of its audience from the less educated sector of the population as opposed to *Kontakte's* 52% **5.** It is interesting—and surprising—to note that the fairly difficult, third-level course *Allez France!* attracted a considerably higher proportion of under-18-school-leavers than any course other than *Ensemble*. The reason for this is probably that the audience was older than for other series and so were of a generation whose mean school-leaving age was lower. **6.** In the *Sur le vif* figures it is predictable that the (B) sample (those who had already learned enough French to start the course without doing *Ensemble*) should in general be slightly better educated than those who had followed *Ensemble*.

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Table 5: Reasons for learning

	Holidays	Business	Friends/ Relatives	General Interest	Keeps mind alert	Other
Kontakte*						
(i) language learning in general	70%	31%	16%	a) in country's culture 59% b) as hobby 43%		communic-ation and understanding between peoples. 27% Common market 25%
(ii) German in particular	55%	35%	32%	a) in German culture 32% b) experience of other languages 27%		Knowledge for hobbies 9%
Wegweiser*	38%	14%		86%		
Ensemble*	52%	18%	21%	61%	55%	Common market 36%
Sur le vif A*	26%	9%	18%	40%	44%	
B*	27%	13%	14%	43%	28%	
Allez France!	11%	9%	12%	36%	30%	
Get by in German	46%	14%	16%	21%		
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/German project)	60%	3%	10%	24%		
Get by in French	47%	4%		48%		
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/French project)	47%	3%		49%		
Ochen' Priyatno	8%	16%		76%		
¡Digame!	45%	5%		42%		

In investigations marked * respondents were invited to give more than one reason if they wished.

Observations

Holidays

The figures for *Get by in French* and *German* were virtually identical. This draws attention to the surprising difference between those for *Sur le vif* and *Wegweiser*, which are the opposite of what one would expect, given that Germany is both further away and more expensive.
The explanation would seem to be two-fold:

a) French is the more traditionally chosen language for 'liberal study' in this country and so is the more obvious choice for those who wish to learn a language for reasons other than visiting the country;
b) There is a significant difference in the wording of the two questionnaires. Whereas *Wegweiser* learners were asked whether they were studying 'for holiday purposes' (which implies nothing about actual holiday plans for the near future) the *Sur le vif* respondents were offered the option of ticking the statement 'I hope to go to France in the holidays' (implying 'this year').

Business/professional needs

The contrast between *Kontakte* and *Ensemble* is in fact even more marked than would appear from the table, since the *Kontakte* respondents gave an average of just under two reasons each for learning German, whereas the *Ensemble* learners gave almost two and a half reasons each, on average, for learning French. Taking this difference into account would have the effect of widening the gap between the two sets of figures.

Table 6: Previous experience of language learning

	Percentage of respondents having studied a) any foreign language	b) the target language
Kontakte	79%	34%
Wegweiser	100% (88% had studied a foreign language other than German. 70% knew some French, 17% some Italian and 13% some Spanish.)	100%
Ensemble	79% (23% knew some German 11% some Spanish and 9% some Italian.)	70%
Sur le vif	100%	100%
Allez France!	100%	100%
Get by in German	79% (52% had at least CSE in French.)	39%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/German project)	86% (67% had at least CSE in French and 16% in German.)	40%+
Get by in French	66% (22% knew some German and 20% some Spanish.)	66%
Get by in Spanish (Spanish/French project)	69% (69% knew some French and 30% some German.)	35%
Ochen' Priyatno	91%+ (91% knew some French and 61% some German.)	67%
¡Dígame!	82% (80% knew some French 45% some German and 24% some Italian.)	57%

Table 7: Rate of drop-out

Kontakte	Only 39% of respondents are positively known to have completed the course. The rate of drop-out may, therefore, be as high as 61%.
Wegweiser	An 'initial' sample of *Wegweiser* students was recruited up to half-way through the course. Of these people, 74% are known to have completed it. From follow-up of the earlier *Kontakte* sample it seems that only 17% followed from the beginning of *Kontakte* to the end of *Wegweiser*.
Ensemble	50% of the original sample stopped returning questionnaires and so were deemed to have dropped out, though only 20% are known for certain to have done so.
Sur le vif	34% of respondents gave up returning questionnaires and so were deemed to be drop-outs, though only 12% are positively known to be so.
Allez France!	42% were considered to be drop-outs because they had not returned questionnaires, but positive information is available for only 20%.
Ochen' Priyatno	A strikingly low drop-out figure of 25% was identified in this investigation. This is almost certainly due to the fact that the survey was not conducted until the end of the series.
¡Digame!	If members of the original sample who did not return the final questionnaire had in fact given up the course, the drop-out figure is 67%.

Table 8: Reasons for dropping out

Kontakte*	Lack of time	48%
	Pressure of work	46%
	Could not follow regularly	33%
Wegweiser	Personal reasons	68%
	Course-based reasons	21%
	Mixture of the two	10%
Ensemble*	Family commitments	32%
	Other courses of study	28%
	Missed programmes—could not catch up	24%
	Inconvenient times	21%
	Pressure of work	18%
Sur le vif	Inconvenient times	22%
	Other courses of study	14%
	Missed programmes—could not catch up	14%
	Course too difficult	11%
	Pressure of work	8%
	Ill health	8%
	Bad reception	8%
Allez France!	Inconvenient times	28%
	Pressure of work	17%
	Missed programmes—could not catch up	14%
	Lost touch over Christmas	13%
Ochen' Priyatno	Personal reasons	c.75%
	Course-based reasons	c.25%
¡Digame!	Personal reasons	92%
	Course-based reasons	8%

In investigations marked * respondents were invited to give more than one reason if they wished.